

^{Dupe} The Congregationalist

We search the world for truth, we cull
The good, the true, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
And all the flower fields of the soul;
And weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read.

— JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

"THE DIRE SIN OF KORAH"

A Guest Editorial

Harry R. Butman, D.D., Los Angeles, California

There is some reason to suppose that many of the Protestant clergy of America have a desire, conscious or unconscious, to be considered priests. One of the interesting tendencies of today's religious scene is that of the minister's proneness to consider himself as something more than "first among equals", as the old Congregational estimate of the pastor's place in the local Church expressed it. In this time of tension and insecurity, there is on the part of many pastors a wish, both latent and manifest, to have the support of the dignity and sanctity of the priestly office.

In Early New England

The wish is by no means modern. It was perhaps the chief cause of friction between ministers and local Churches in old New England. Ola E. Winslow's book, "Meeting House Hill", paints a brilliant and detailed picture of the struggle between pulpit and pew in Colonial New England. There were giants in the land in the early days. The first pastors were able, university-trained men who were sufficiently dedicated to their cause to suffer exile and impoverishment for it. But as the years went on, the caliber of the colonial clergy dropped. Struggling provincial Harvard was far from the equal of the great English and continental universities. Boston had no such intellectual life as London.

By the early 1700s, the average pastor was little better than a literate farmer. It is a documentary on the low general level of education at this time that the pig-scaiding, cow-keeping, hay-raking minister was still the key figure in the community. He was the "parson", that is, the "person", of the town.

But as the personal qualifications of the ministers became less, their demands for professional, even priestly status, became greater. Precisely because of their personal inadequacy they fought for the position, the impersonal office, of a priest. A long fierce wrestle for power began. The stubborn New England farmers based their opposition on little things, — who should have the leftover communion elements, who should write the agenda for the annual meeting, — but undergirding and dignifying their position was the great Protestant principle of the priesthood of believers, the equality of all Christians before God.

An Unsung Hero

But the priesthood of believers goes back in time beyond the Reformation or the New Testament. The first man to put it in plain words was a man whom the colonial clergy considered a primal sinner. This man was Korah, a calumniated fighter in man's long struggle for freedom. So successfully did the preachers denounce "the dire sin of Korah" that if he is remembered at all it is only in the light of their clerical smear campaign. We recall the woodcut illustrating the letter K in "The New England Primer", and the vindictive triumph of the couplet

*"Proud Korah's troop
Was swallowed up."*

Who was Korah? The 16th Chapter of Numbers tells his strange tale. And when you read it, and wonder

about the awful penalty for rebellion against religious authority, (the earth opened and devoured him and his fellow rebels) remember that the account was written by priests who had a special interest in a narrative that strengthened the power of their office. Well, what did Korah do that was so wicked? What was "the dire sin of Korah"? The Bible is vivid and specific.

Korah gathered his followers together and boldly faced Moses and Aaron who had, in essence, been forcing a centralized, priest-controlled government on nomadic democratic Israel. He said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye yourselves up above the congregation of the Lord?" (Numbers 16:3)

The Spiritual Foundations

In saying these words the unrecognized thinker and hero was laying the spiritual foundation for democracy. The essence of a religious democracy is not a mere preponderance of numbers, as we sometimes suppose. It is not a quantitative thing, but a qualitative matter. The congregation is holy, because "the Lord is among them".

It is wrong, it is impious, for any man to lift himself up above God's holy congregation. This is the great tradition in which we free Congregationalists stand.

Korah's brave words should be graven on our hearts. And with them should be carved the teaching of another Rebel against Temple and priestcraft, who spoke of the equality of men before God, and was killed for it. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Our Cover Picture. The cover picture on this number of THE CONGREGATIONALIST was selected as suitable for the month in which we observe Mothers' Day. This is a reproduction of a picture in an old "family album," presented here through the courtesy of Mrs. Robert K. Richardson of Beloit, Wisconsin.

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A RURAL CHURCH REBORN

Rev. F. Willard Kime, Eaton Rapids, Michigan

"That church has been dead for over two years, the building is about to be taken over for fruit storage. Several have tried to hold services without success. Too bad, but there is no interest here." Those were the words that greeted a layman "who wanted to preach", as he talked with folks in Pullman, Michigan, a little village of 250 inhabitants, 10 miles from Lake Michigan, one day in early October, 1951. But they were spoken to a fellow who had spent several hours talking to a woman, a dedicated Christian woman, whose determined spirit that her Church would live, had never given up. "Somehow, someday God will send someone who will revive the spirit that at one time existed in that Church," she said. She was the last known officer and active member of that little Church in that little cross-roads town, that the State Conference had given up as lost.

"We'll try, with God's help," were the promised words of this inexperienced layman. "You get on the phone and call all the people you can. We will start services on October 28." The next few days the layman and his wife scrubbed floors and pews; tacked up wall paper that hung from the walls and ceiling; patched up broken windows; installed stove pipe on an old wood-burning stove in the rear; carried water from a gasoline station a block away. On October 28, the church bell, that had been silent for so long, pealed forth its call to worship.

The layman and his wife and that one consecrated woman were there to greet the folks. Those three, plus God, were the only ones present at that service, but it was held!

Working From the Ground Up

The next few months were spent in calling. The services were not resumed until June 29 due to bad weather and a very leaky roof. On that day there were four in the congregation — it had doubled! Each succeeding Sunday saw a steady increase, 75 on Thanksgiving evening. 137 crowded into the little church on Christmas Eve. A teen-age girl and the layman's wife had started the church school, and it grew. The layman and his wife who didn't have sense enough "to know it couldn't be done" kept driving those 30 miles from his home from June until December calling on folks and getting repairs made to the building. They received nothing for their efforts except God's blessing and "learning how to preach and minister." But the people of Pullman were instilled with a new spirit. The spark became ignited and burst into flame. They "dug in" and worked in a way seldom seen today. All offerings were used in building repairs, not too much from these country folks whose earnings were not large, but a lot of time and talent was given, which, after all, really come from the heart.

During the first year and a half, ground was broken for an educational-recreational building — more contributed labor — more friends came to see this "thing that couldn't be done." Women folks worked on fundraising dinners at a near-by lodge hall given rent free. At the end of two years a completely remodelled building, new addition, new forced-air heating plant, all valued in excess of \$15,000 came into being and paid for except \$700.00. Since then a fine parsonage has been added and many more improvements.

The church has been aided by an annual \$500.00 ministerial salary grant from the State Conference which has now been assumed by our National Association Commission on Missions following the Pullman Church's uniting with our National Association. It is their determination that their present financial obligations be paid by the end of this year and that they may become self-sustaining. The present pastor, Rev. George Seafort, was called last July with help from our pastoral relations office. He has instilled additional spirit in the church and community. It is regrettable that space does not permit mentioning those who gave so much to this "Little Church in the Wildwood" that has created such a bright spot in the lives of people in a little country town in Michigan, but their names will be forever engraved upon the hearts of men and their deeds will live through generations yet unborn.



What became of that "layman" and his wife who had just one person at their first church service? He resigned from a life-time assured position and head of a successful business and moved on to other places "where it couldn't be done." He later became ordained and since 1955 has been active in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and the continuing Congregational fellowship.

MORE CONGREGATIONAL NAMES

In the April CONGREGATIONALIST four names were listed of overseas Congregationalists who would be interested to read our periodical if some individual or group in this country would subscribe for them. In addition to those names we also suggest:

Rev. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones
Principal
Yorks United Independent
College, Emm Lane,
Bradford, Yorks,
England

Rev. James L. Proudfoot
9 George Street,
Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

Rev. Robert Clarke
Rugby Congregational
Belfast, North Ireland.

Rev. Alexander Jackson
Congregational Church,
Ballinahinch,
County Down, Ireland

Please notify the Editor if you wish to send the paper to any of these or other overseas Congregationalists. Regular rate, \$2.00 a year.

THE AGE OF THE SHRUG

Rene J. Dawe, East Braintree, Massachusetts

Recently Patrick O'Donovan, Washington correspondent for the *London Observer*, commenting on the American scene, wrote, "If you listen to America you will detect a persistent background noise . . . it is a ferociously critical and very literate sort of noise . . . saying that there is something profoundly wrong in and with America."



This offstage noise, Mr. O'Donovan contends, is fairly new and is a cacophony of the voices and writings of university teachers, of theologians, of politically-minded scientists, of perturbed generals, of most of the serious journalists, of

almost all the artists and there are even a few politicians in the chorus."

Expressing themselves despairingly in a manner which even dedicated European anti-Americans would hesitate to adopt, they portray our times in this country as ones "dripping with fat," ones of "spiritual flabbiness"; times which are breeding "a new type of human being — a guy with a full belly, an empty mind, and a hollow heart"; times which have produced the "age of the shrug."

John Steinbeck, on returning from England where he gathered background material for his forthcoming novel dealing with King Arthur and his Knights, said, in a letter to Adlai Stevenson, that he returns to view in horror a "creeping, all-pervading nerve-gas of immorality." And Walter Lippman, a middle-of-the-roader, writes, "There is not much doubt now the struggle is likely to end, for it lies between those who, believing, care very much — and those who, lacking belief, cannot care very much."

But all these men, Steinbeck, Lippman, professors, theologians, perturbed generals, serious journalists, artists and even a few politicians "*profoundly love the original idea of America.*" They "deplore a loss of morality and purpose in their society. They find an emptiness where a belief should be."

The Original Idea

The original idea of America! Ah, yes! What a morality, what a purpose, what a belief that was! Freedom! Equality! Responsible individual conscience! Belief in God and His eternal plan! The authority of the Scriptures! The priesthood of all believers! The dignity and value of each and every individual soul!

And where did this original idea of America come from? It came from our fathers. It came from the sufferings, the persecutions, the martyrdoms, the intolerances which our fathers suffered first hand under opposing hierarchical, authoritarian, free thought suppressing, group-dynamic centred systems and concepts of society. It came not as a gradual evolution of groping human thought but as a relatively sudden and revolutionary overthrow of all those influences which had conspired to repress the magnificence and God-like nature of human life.

It came as a denial, expressed in the most exquisite forms of human suffering, of those forces which would relegate and reduce man to the intellectual and spiritual level of the sheep. It came from the belief that as sheep, with Christ as the Shepherd, we were sheep with divine possibilities, God-given rights, an immortal destiny and not merely animal sheep destined for some authorities' slaughter-house to be made into lamb chops. It came as an attempt to make a reality in human life of Christ's words, "How much then is a man better than a sheep?" It came, in short, from Congregationalism!

Under the lamplight in the master's cabin on a flimsy bark riding at anchor in Provincetown Harbor, the original idea of America was conceived. The misery, suffering and sputtering flintlocks of the determined colonists provided the birth pangs out of which the idea became a living body in the form of the Constitution of the United States of America. Up through its adolescence it fought its way. In the Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, The Civil War, The Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II, hundreds of thousands of souls sacrificed themselves for the continued life of the idea. And now, facing gradual loss of identification with the idea, facing virtual extermination, facing merger, stand the Congregational Churches of America out of which the original idea of America sprang.

Shall we just shrug our shoulders in this "age of the shrug" and say "What can we do?" What can we do when higher, more demanding, pressuring forces are at work spouting great phrases which picture the glories that will be ours under the universal ecumenical church? What can we do when all about us society is forming itself into groups and super-groups? What can we do when it is considered odd, old-fashioned, reactionary, to be different, individual or to defend personal convictions? What can we do but join (a penchant of Americans, by the way) when all of society tells us that individual conscience and thought is not reliable and only that of the group valid? Are we not told by many authorities that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts? They tell us this in spite of the geometric axiom that states the whole is *equal* to the sum of its parts, and they tell us this in defiance of the observed truth that in human affairs the whole is equal to nothing more than an *average* of its parts. They tell us nothing whatsoever about the great individual benefactors of the human race to whom mankind must be forever grateful. But what can we do?

With Hymn Book and Bible

We can do this. We can open our hymn books. We can read and take to heart once again the words and spirit of the great hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still," which has come to be used so widely and frequently in our Protestant Churches everywhere. Listen to the words, feel the spirit. "Faith of our fathers, living still, . . . in heart and conscience free . . . through the truth that comes from God mankind shall then indeed be free . . . faith and prayer have kept our country brave and free . . . God's great power shall win all nations unto thee . . . through the truth that comes from God our children have true liberty . . . and blest would be their children's fate if they,

continued on page 5

like them, should die for thee." This is the original idea of America. Do we need more?

Then we can open our Bibles. We can listen to the great Paul as he cries, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17) or "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (Thess. 2:15) and "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).

The Ecumenical Tree

The ecumenical growth we are witnessing today is like a great tree spreading its mammoth branches to include us all under their chilling shade. It is a tree that will have as its trunk a hard authoritarian and impersonal core of rules, regulations and prohibitions. The loving heart and the initials of Christ will be difficult to see, if they are carved upon it at all. From the main trunk will spread a multitudinous welter of branches; stems and twigs could be broken off or chopped and torn away by the hands of the despoiler and the trunk would not care. For the whole tree would be the important thing, not its parts; for is not the whole greater than the sum of its parts?

Trees die. They die and fall to the ground and new trees replace them so that a forest of trees covers the landscape testifying to the glory and vastness of the power of God. Our churches today are the many and varied trees of the Forest of God, each with its own roots, each spreading its own seeds and reforesting the landscape of man, and each with its roots in the common soil of Christian faith. It is in the soil that they are one; it is from the soil that all draw their ecumenical food and nourishment. Who wants trees all of one identical species? Think of the beauty that would be lost to man's eyes!

To chop down all the different trees and leave but one massive tree standing would be to imperil the future of all trees. We have come from a past when one great tree did stand and everything hung from it alone. That tree became rotten and corrupt, infested with the worms and fungi of decay that almost caused its death. Only by the saving grace of God did tender, fragile new shoots spring from it and the idea of trees on earth was saved for posterity. Ecumenicity means a return to the one great tree with all its inherent dangers of corruption, inner rot and possible death.

The Task Before Us

We must preserve Congregationalism. We must fight for it, work for it, make it grow. We must tell the story of what it is and what it stands for to all the world, for all the world needs its lessons and a knowledge of its history and eternal truths. We cannot stand by shrugging our shoulders and silently become just another nonentity in the "age of the shrug." We must raise our voices, think our thoughts, speak our minds. If merger should become inevitable in the course of human events then we must work to ensure that what Congregationalism stands for is not silently smothered as a meaningless part of a senseless whole. As Patrick O'Donovan says, "The end, if it comes, usually comes as a surprise, and in silence."

Rather than shrug our shoulders in a gesture of confused bewilderment we must throw them back, square and brace them, and prepare for the long haul that faces us as a small minority; even as Christ Himself was a small minority — a minority of one. Rather than become just another conforming leaf on the ecumenical tree we must stand as a tree ourselves, albeit a small one.

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

On September 5, 1810 a small group of ministers met at the Congregational parsonage in Farmington, Connecticut to discuss the world-wide extension of the Christian Gospel. Four ministers of local Churches and the devout Governor of Connecticut were holding the first annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the first foreign missions board in the nation. Congregationalists were there at the very beginning.

Inspiring them and prodding them was the enthusiasm of the Williams College Haystack Meeting and the concern of many Congregational ministers for a global version of Congregationalism. Against them and hindering their efforts was the idea that free Christianity should be limited to New England.

The American Board tried to cooperate with all Protestants in their mission work, a fine but foolish notion. From the beginning efforts were made to establish self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches around the world. History shows that other cooperating denominations tried to reproduce their own forms of Christianity in American Board missions and that the Congregationalists were too gentle to insist upon their own ideals. Repeatedly Congregationalism Plus became Congregationalism Missing.

Part of this was due to a false definition of ecumenicity in which we gave up everything so that other churches would cooperate with us. A larger part was due to the fact that too many Congregational laymen did not care enough to help establish Congregational Churches around the world. We have now had 150 years to learn sad lessons from history.

Goodsell's official history of the ABCFM glosses over this basic mistake in policy, though his text adequately shows its effects. "You Shall Be My Witnesses" is required reading because it so clearly reveals the need for Congregational devotion to the Congregational ideal in the younger churches of Asia and Africa. If Congregational freedoms are valid in Boston or New Haven, they are no less relevant in South India, Alaska or Australia.

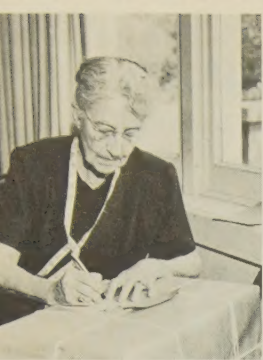
(American Board printing, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.)

Savoy Prize Book Published. The prize-winning manuscript in the Savoy Tercentenary Contest, "The Congregational Way," by Rev. Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., is to be published in the near future by Prentice-Hall, Inc. Further announcement will be made about this in the June CONGREGATIONALIST.

continued from column 1

The original idea of America must not vanish from men's minds. It is the last great idea of truth man possesses. If he loses it he loses all. It is slipping away, slowly and inexorably, but it must not be allowed to slip from the mind of the church that gave it birth.

For in the generations to come, when ecumenicity has had its day and has succumbed to inevitable rot, Congregationalism must still be alive with its arms outstretched ready to receive the tortured, tormented, enslaved and disillusioned souls who looked in vain for the glories of the one big church. Congregationalism must stand forever as the giver and the final custodian of human freedom on earth. This is the destiny of Congregationalism — guardian of the original idea of America — not food for the encroaching, ecumenical growth which threatens to spread throughout.



WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Restyling Our Mission Program

Mrs. Dale Kelley
First Congregational Church, Burlington, Iowa

Have you ever taken a perfectly good basic dress, shortened or lengthened it, added a white collar or some costume jewelry, and ended up with a "new" outfit? That is what we have done to the Mission program in our Church.

The "basic" was a wonderful group of fifteen missionary-minded women who established a World Missionary Group about ten years ago. It would be impossible to estimate the amount of good done by them since that time; but last October they felt it wise to disband as a group in order to lay the foundation for an expanded program. A few weeks later the Committee was asked to plan a program for the whole Church. All were invited to participate in clothing drives for Piedmont College and for World Service. The Women's Council paid the postage.

Missions Projects

The "projects" division compiled a list of local projects worthy of support. Some of the circles have given aid — mostly clothing — to three Junior High girls through the Social Service Agency.

One circle provided toys for the Church nursery; one adopted a "Grandma" at the County Home, who had no friends or relatives nearby. Other projects suggested were articles needed by the County Home, books for the Church library, help for Senior Citizens' meetings. In order to avoid duplication, circle chairmen were asked to notify a designated member of the committee when a project was chosen.

The "Women's Project — our Shared Benevolence," for Piedmont College this year, was chosen as a sacrificial gift. Special emphasis was placed on this during Lent and an appropriate dedication ceremony planned for the April Council meeting.

So far this year money has been sent to the National Association, the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches, and to the Hong Kong and Formosa refugees. The Council is supporting *only* those projects approved by the Commission on Missions of the National Association.

Educational Program

The Educational division of the committee planned a program on Congregationalism for the circles to use in November. For January and February a study of Africa was outlined, with two women offering to review Carpenter's "The Way of Africa" for any circle or group wishing it. The "Book of Mark" was similarly reviewed as a Lenten study during March and April.

This division prepared a book list which is placed in the City Library as well as on the Church bulletin board. Those who have read ten or more books on the

list were to be recognized at the April Council meeting. One member, a former librarian, offered to help any group in a discussion of the books listed.

Excellent programs for the monthly meetings have been planned by the Women's Council Program Committee: the one-act "William Rogers and Mary", a review of early New England Churches, a discussion of the "S" system of balancing women's activities as suggested in "Stimulating Suggestions," reports of the National Association annual meeting, and talks by exchange students in the vicinity.



Burlington, Iowa. Members of Margaret Nairn Circle meet with a nurse to discuss adoption of a "Grandma" at the County Home.

Church-wide Participation

The Church-wide mission program began in November when Church School classes, PF groups, and circles were urged to include a study of some phase of Congregationalism. In December the story of Rev. Philotheos Zikas, a Congregational missionary in Alexandroupolis, Greece, was told in all groups. (Rev. Mr. Zikas is a friend of our minister.) At the Christmas program the children put their contributions in small white envelopes with a red ribbon tie. These "white gifts" were hooked onto the Christmas tree and later sent to Greece.

During January and February a study of Africa was planned, the committee sending for maps and books to

continued at bottom of page 7

DIVISION IN YOUR CHURCH

Mrs. James E. Solberg, Alhambra, California

The question most commonly asked by troubled members of Congregational Christian Churches is, "How can we discuss the issues of the merger, pro and con, without a serious division developing within our membership?"

The answer would seem to be that division cannot be avoided among deeply concerned Congregationalists when the basic issue involves the locus of the Headship of Christ; whether we are to delegate it to the executive committees and General Synod of the United Church of Christ, or whether we are to retain it in our local Churches.

It cannot be expected that those who sincerely believe the Scripture text, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst," will readily subscribe to the theory put forth in the Preamble of the Constitution for the United Church, "The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head Jesus Christ." (paragraph 2.) Thus the Headship is claimed for the vertical power-structure which is outlined in the remainder of the Constitution and By-Laws, of which local churches are "basic units".

The Basic Principle

The cardinal principle of Congregationalism is that each local Church is a complete Church, not a unit of a national Church, and that each Church recognizes Jesus Christ as its only Head and final Authority.

This principle is the foundation on which the autonomy of our Churches rests. Even though lip-service has been given to maintenance of the autonomy of our Churches by way of inclusion of several *amendable* paragraphs in the Constitution for the United Church, this same document and its By-Laws place great authority in the hands of denominational leaders and bodies outside the local Churches.

There are many among us who do not value the cardinal principle of Congregationalism and who wish our Churches to become a part of the United Church. They would delegate the precious freedom of self-determination under the leadership of the spirit of Christ, as their sole Head, to representatives and officials who

may have no conception of the needs and aspirations of the memberships of local Churches as well as the communities in which they serve.

Jesus did not teach us to seek "peace at any price" but rather predicted there would be divisions among men. In Luke 12:51 we find these words, "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." The peace which the Master preached concerned that peace of mind and soul which comes from faith in an all-loving Father and the knowledge that we, as Christians, are constantly seeking to do His will.

Too High A Price

The sincere concern over possible division, which has been expressed by clergy and laity alike, arouses much sympathy until it is realized that the sacrifice of the basic principle of Congregationalism, from which all other Congregational principles have evolved, has been asked as the "price" for membership in the United Church of Christ.

Let us continue with the text from the Gospel of Luke: "for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." In these words Jesus tells us that division must be expected as the result of His teachings, even in one household, or one Church, or one nation, or among nations. Bitterness and strife need not characterize the division which is certain to occur in many of our Churches, for we can hold to our basic differences of belief and opinion in a spirit of Christian love and tolerance which will make us worthy of the name "Christian."

As Congregational Christians, let us face the future with the courage and faith which our founding fathers so well demonstrated; with the knowledge and belief that the Will of God shall be done wherever and whenever the leading of His Spirit is humbly sought.

WOMEN'S WORK

continued from page 6

be used by the classes and other groups. At least one class period each month was devoted to this study. An "African" family night dinner was planned for late February. The nursery, kindergarten, and first grade made drums to accompany their "Magic Tom Tom" song. Other classes also took part in the entertainment and made table decorations. A film on Africa was shown and PFers waited on table. (A copy of the invitation sent to all families is available at the National Association office on request. It could be adapted to many foreign home mission themes.)

The Church has sent money from its Benevolence Fund to the National Association, the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches, the Churches of South India, Rev. Mr. Zikas, Dr. Laubach's Literacy Fund, two local colored Churches, and

plans to contribute to the National Association Scholarship Fund in the near future, as it looks forward to an expanded program of benevolent giving by individuals as well as the Church.

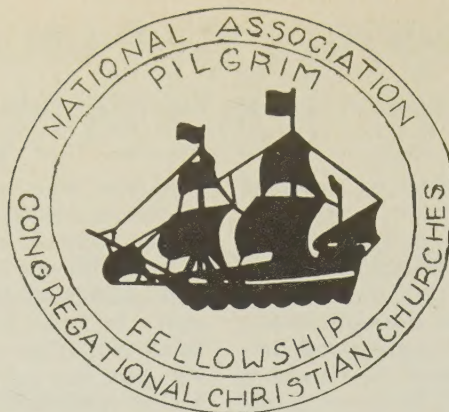
Plans for Next Year

An enlarged program on Congregationalism is planned for next October and November. We also expect to study the Missions projects of the National Association, and to investigate the possibility of a daytime or evening study group.

The year's program will be planned in May, immediately after the Women's Council annual meeting, giving more time for action.

Our program is neither perfect — nor static. Like the basic dress, it can be shortened or lengthened, let out or taken in, "dressed up" or "dressed down". In fact — pearls can be added!

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

**Marilyn Heaney, Secretary, 1874 Lake Drive S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Youth Commission Meets in Detroit

The week-end of March 12-13 was the time for the meeting of the Commission on Youth Work of the National Association, held at Detroit, Michigan. Rev. Paul G. Pitman of Burlington, Iowa, chairman, reports a successful and enthusiastic gathering.

Study of the various areas of concern occupied a major part of the session. Rev. Robert H. Scanland of Pomona, California, was asked to serve as assistant advisor for the West, and Rev. Harry Claik of Royal Oak, Michigan, for the Middle West. Dr. Henry David Gray of Hartford continues as Northeast advisor.

The Commission favored the establishment of a Senior Pilgrim Fellowship helper publication to bring suggestions for programs and other activities to the youth groups. Bruce Alexander of Hartford was appointed to lead in steps to carry out this plan.

Jackson Fellowship Presents Merger Issue

The Senior Pilgrim Fellowship of Arbor Grove Congregational Church, Jackson, Michigan, has been studying the history and nature of Congregationalism, the history of the merger controversy, and the proposed Constitution of the United Church of Christ. On Sunday, March 6, this group had charge of the complete morning church service, using the theme "Why We Believe in Congregationalism." The teen-agers prepared all their own material, including a two-part sermon on Congregationalism, its past and its future. Most helpful in the study and preparation for this service was the tape recording of Dr. Henry David Gray's address.

The service was exceptionally well-received by the congregation, which found it most informative and persuasive. This P. F. has become a well-informed and highly dedicated group of real Congregationalists. We highly commend this form of presentation of the subject to our sister Churches. Factual testimony from the youth of a Church is received without the element of controversy which is sometimes present when adults do the witnessing.

(Reported by Rev. Robert Haldane, Jr.)

Southern California Rally

One hundred high school young people from the Church of the Messiah, Los Angeles, First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, and Pilgrim Church, Pomona, met for the afternoon and evening of Sunday, February 28, in the Pomona Church. The program

included a report by Miss Ann Morgan of First Church on the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship Conference held on Cape Cod last summer. Miss Morgan also answered various questions about summer service projects.

Patty Vance of First Church, Los Angeles, taught several new folk-songs to the group. Rev. Michael Vance spoke on "Youth and Religion." A spaghetti dinner was served by the Pilgrim Church youth and parents. The rally closed with a dramatic presentation of "The Last Supper," written by Mr. Vance and produced by the "Youth Productions Group" of First Church. A Communion service was conducted by Rev. Harry R. Butman, Rev. Raymond A. Waser, and Rev. Robert H. Scanland.

Groups in other parts of the country who are interested in having the Youth Productions Group appear in their localities may make inquiry from Rev. Michael Vance, 535 South Hoover Ave., Los Angeles 5, California.

Northeast P. F. Council Meeting

As this issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST goes to press plans are being made for the Spring meeting of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship Council. The Winthrop Congregational Church, Holbrook, Massachusetts, Rev. Harvey L. Pierce, pastor, will be host to two delegates from each Church in the Northeast Fellowship over the week-end of April 29-30 and May 1. Plans will be made for the "School's Out" Rally to be held in June, and the Council will serve as a Nominating Committee for the group. The election of officers will be held at the School's Out Rally. Churches from New England and the New York City area have sent young people to the several meetings of the Northeast Fellowship, and it is expected that a good number will be present at this Council Meeting.

Our New Page Heading

The heading used at the top of this Pilgrim Fellowship page is an experiment. Comments will be welcomed by the Editor. If the opinions expressed to him are generally favorable, this will be adopted as the standard heading for this page in the future. Criticisms and other suggestions will be given careful consideration. Young people and their advisers are urged to tell us what they think about it.

NEWS NOTES

New Member Church. The First Congregational Church of New Castle, Pennsylvania, has voted to join the National Association.

"Campus Explorations." Young men and women of college and graduate school age will gather for a "Campus Explorations" program in a California mountain retreat this summer. The time will be spent in thinking about life work, under skilled spiritual leaders. Two camps will be held if registration warrants it. For information write to "Campus Explorations," Campbell House, P. O. Box 877, San Jacinto, California.

DEDICATION AT ITHACA



On Sunday morning, May 15th, the members of the First Congregational Church of Ithaca, New York, will dedicate a new church at 309 Highland Road. This is the fulfillment of prayers, dreams and labors of more than a decade during which there have been three building fund drives and various revisions of plan to correspond with available funds.

Designed by Dr. Arland Dirlam, internationally known church architect, the structure has a split-level effect which puts the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall beneath it both on a ground level. The 3½ acre plot on which it stands includes parking space for 150 cars, a playground area beyond the church and other land which might ultimately be used for a parsonage.

The \$300,000 building and site are strategically located between Cornell University (within walking distance of more than 20 fraternities and sororities) and Cayuga Heights, a growing residential section with no other church among its 3000 residents.

The pastor of the church is Reverend Howard E. Quirk who in 1959 succeeded Dr. Edward L. Christie after the latter had completed a twenty-year pastorate. Dr. Christie remains affiliated with the church as Chaplain to Congregational students at Cornell University. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Richard B. Fischer, Ithaca, N.Y.)

Children Raise Money for Refugee Work. The Primary Department of the Winthrop Congregational Church School, Holbrook, Massachusetts, has raised \$71.00 toward the mission for refugees in Hong Kong and Formosa, sponsored by the National Association Commission on Missions. Some of the children made and sold potholders for the Fund, while others earned the money in other ways. Mrs. Clark Pritchard is Primary Department Superintendent.

Californians Organize. The first meeting of the Congregational Club, a new organization to promote the Congregational Way and to provide fellowship for free Churches will be held on May 22 at Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona. Professor George V. Bohman of Royal Oak, Michigan, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Association, will be the keynote speaker. The Chairman is Mrs. James E. Solberg of Alhambra. Dr. Harry R. Butman and Rev. Walter J. Vernon are consultants.

To Reach Dr. Belden. When Dr. Albert D. Belden of London, "From the Old Country" correspondent for THE CONGREGATIONALIST, is in this country between June 24 and September 23, he will be available for lectures on "The Pilgrim Heritage." He should be addressed c/o Rev. Ralph H. Read, 21600 West 10½ Mile Road, Detroit 19, Michigan.

Pastoral Changes. The Community Congregational Church of Columbus, Pennsylvania, has called to its pastorate Rev. Reginald A. Merrifield, and the Congregational Church in Winthrop, Maine, has called Rev. Earle A. Clifford.

SOUTH CHURCH LAYS CORNERSTONE



On Sunday, February 21, between the first and second morning worship services, the South Congregational Church of Hartford, Connecticut, laid the cornerstone of the new Archibald Chapel, Fellowship Hall, Youth Center, and Church Activities Building. The service was conducted by Dr. Henry David Gray and Rev. John H. Elmore, ministers of the Church. Stones were laid by Miss Elizabeth Hyde, Miss Cheryl Grandahl, Mr. Philip O'Shan, and Miss Janet Donstah. The photograph shows Dr. Gray handling the trowel, as Miss Grandahl and Mr. O'Shan look on. Miss Grandahl, representing the Sunday School, is the daughter of the Chairman of the Business Committee at the time the project was originated, and Mr. O'Shan represents the new members of the Church. (Photo courtesy Hartford COURANT.)

Cheboygan Church Votes to Remain Congregational. The Congregational Church of Cheboygan, Michigan, has taken a definite vote to remain Congregational in the event of the formation of the United Church of Christ.

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

"UNENFORCEABLE OBLIGATIONS"

Dr. John D. Rose, Lathrup Village, Michigan

Jesus once told a terse parable which seems at first to be foreign to his spirit of love. The story concerns *the Farmer and the Servant* (Luke 17:7-10.) The latter came home in the evening tired from a day of plowing in the field. Yet, his master did not pamper him but rather ordered that his meal be prepared and served; afterwards the servant could eat his meal and then drag his weary body to bed. The parable concludes with: "Likewise ye, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants: we have only done that which was our duty to do.'"

We shall miss the point of the parable if we only equate the farmer with our Almighty Father who makes imperial demands upon us. We should only say the obvious, that no matter how hard we work at our Christianity we can never place God in debt to us. After we have served and sacrificed for the worthiest of causes, we are to say to ourselves, "God owes me nothing, I have only done that which it was my duty to do."

The parable will profit us more if we turn our attention to the servant and the attitudes it was possible for him to have toward his work. He for instance, could have a slinking, dodging attitude toward his work.

Or, he could feel that the hand of fate had consigned him to a life of hard service, but that he would be dutiful. Still, a third choice would be to pray for the Christian grace to change his hard duties into loving desires.

When we feel that our lot in life is inherently difficult, then all that we do is drudgery. The one mile of roadwork we have to do each day seems as if it were fifty. But, let us — of our own volition — decide that we are going to do two miles; *then* we follow Jesus in going the second mile, and we also find delight even in our common places.

An important Congregational principle is at stake here. We would translate the ecclesiastical "You ought" into the voice of desire and say, "I love." It has been our privilege to introduce the voluntary principle into church life. We would feel that the strongest and most powerful Gospel to be one in which we "get to" not "got to". Rather than write an obituary for this way of life, we offer the prayer that all men will be motivated by a high calling to which they have freely and gladly responded.

In a day in which we are surrounded by machines and gadgets, we are disposed to press buttons to get things done rather than put pressure on our initiative powers for doing them ourselves. We adults work hard at our own specialties during the day and then sit back in the evening while other specialists provide our amusements ready-made on television. Thus, our imaginations grow dim and our initiative loses its spring.

Transfer this into your religious life and you change as did the disciples. Jesus, at length, said to them, "I no longer call you servants, but now I call you friends." Their "work" changed into "inspiring deeds" in behalf of fellow workers. They worked not out of duty but to appropriate the divine blessing.

Massachusetts Committee Informs Churches

The Massachusetts Committee for Continuation of Congregational Christian Churches, meeting on April 9, 1960, voted to send to all the 583 Congregational Churches in the commonwealth a letter in which the State Conference is challenged to face the solemn duty of clarifying the issues before Congregationalism. Copies of the letter were also sent to the REPORTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL LAYMEN, the PILGRIM STATE NEWS and the officers of the State Conference. The letter reads as follows:

To Massachusetts' 583 Congregational Christian Churches:

We challenge the Massachusetts Conference of Congregational Christian Churches to face a solemn duty. That duty is to de-fog the issues and clarify a few points on the *proposed* merger of our churches into the United Church of Christ:

1. Your church has NOT merged, and can't merge until your members vote to join or accept the United Church of Christ's Constitution. This has not been presented yet in its final form.

2. There are just TWO Evangelical and Reformed Churches in Massachusetts. They, and only they, in Massachusetts are merged into the United Church of Christ.

3. ONLY YOUR OWN MEMBERSHIP'S VOTE CAN MERGE YOUR CHURCH. That's the essence of Congregationalism. The congregation has full say in such matters.

4. The Massachusetts State Conference of Congregational Christian Churches was formed by the churches to carry out their co-operative projects. So was the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches. They were not designed as *governing* bodies.

5. Every Congregationalist has the right to know exactly what he is voting out of existence in Congregationalism if his church accepts the change-over to "government from above" in the United Church of Christ.

The Massachusetts Conference of Congregational Christian Churches has the *urgent* duty to bring this entire merger question out in the open, at the highest level. This should be done at the forthcoming State Conference in May.

Let us do away with evasiveness and misconceptions in this merger matter. Let each church hear the broadest possible, the fairest presentation of facts, then make a decision.

Westford, Massachusetts
April 9, 1960

SYDNEY AND CAROLYN ABBOTT
Co-Chairmen

continued from column 1

This is the kind of cross Jesus would have us bear. It is not a heavy one. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and you will find the burden light and the yoke easy."

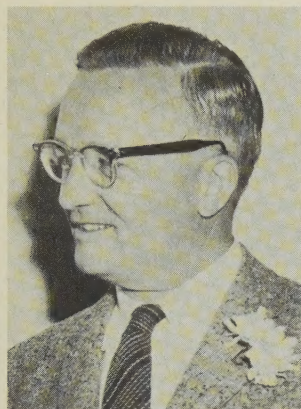
In the school of Christ there is a point where we cross the divide; where the uphill climb of hard duty changes into the gravity of desire. The effort to support religion is transformed into a state of grace where religion supports us. It is *then* that we change, from unprofitable servants of the field, doing only that which is our duty to do, into the friends inside the household.

From the Chairman of the Executive Committee

Professor George V. Bohman, Royal Oak, Michigan

Before you read this note, our Churches will have passed through the Lenten season. I hope that each of you renewed and intensified the spirit of devotion to the cause of righteousness for which Jesus was willing to suffer. I hope, too, that each of you feels a sense of triumph in the victory of His spirit.

What can we do now? Letters that pass across my desk tell of projects for new free Churches and other home and foreign missionary projects to help solve some of the most pressing human needs. Our own and some other Churches have numbers of members planning to help Frank Lau-



Dr. Bohman

bach's Army of Compassion. As I watch this planning, it becomes more apparent that you can increase your own and your Church's interest in missionary giving by the study and choice of individual projects for at least part of your benevolences. Our Missionary Society can furnish you with leaflets outlining several worthwhile missionary endeavors.

We shall look forward to fellowship with many of you again at the Annual Meeting of the National Association at Maywood, Illinois, during the week of October 3rd. Maywood is a suburb just west of Chicago and near O'Hare Airport. Rev. Leonard H. Maunder and his fine Church are planning carefully to be helpful and gracious hosts. In the meantime, important planning meetings of the Commissions on Youth and on Publications have been held and the Christian Education Commission will meet in early May when the Program Committee and Executive Committee meet. We would appreciate any suggestions which you may wish to make to any of these groups.

IOWA FELLOWSHIP MEETS IN CEDAR RAPIDS

Rev. C. Earl Page, Spencer, Iowa

The Minister, Mrs. Mary White, and members of the Bethany Congregational Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, were gala hosts to the Iowa Fellowship in Winter Meeting, March 14th. The entertaining Church members were up and about at an early hour baking Bohemian Kolaches for the arrival of nearly a hundred representatives of Iowa churches and some visitors from Minnesota and Illinois.

Mrs. White led in devotions describing "excuses wrapped in napkins". Greetings from National Association officials and numerous other church workers were read. Moderator A. M. "Jim" Bjornstad of the Spencer Church gave a layman's opening statement after which Dr. Howard Conn of the Plymouth Church in Minneapolis was introduced. Dr. Conn defined Congregationalism as "not basically an institution but a sense of fellowship and love. It's an adventure in faith, ever since the time of Bushnell. . . . Freedom to think and interpret in the light of one's own conscience." He characterized the developing United Church as "resurgent orthodoxy" quoting from the preamble of that new body "to preserve the historic faith from destructive error." He declared that "If the Church is paramount then we are shackled to an institution." Dr. Conn described the fact that "Jesus Christ did not start any Church" but sought rather to engage "a company of people whose lives were changed," the very "essence always fellowship."

Concerns of National Association

Dr. Max Strang of Marshalltown described the extension and outreach program of the Missions work of the National Association, pointing up the (1) Industrial evangelism work in Japan, (2) Refugee problems in Hong Kong, (3) Churches of South India, and (4) Orphanage work in Italy.

Round Table Workshops were set up during both the morning and afternoon sessions dealing with Mission Projects, Church School Curriculum and study packets, Women's Fellowship projects and programs, and Men in Church Management, covering Business Administration, Financial Records and Stewardship Campaigns. (This workshop drew the interest of women as well as men, revealing a definite need for continued studies in these much-neglected areas.)

Youth Projects

The Rev. Paul G. Pitman, new minister of the Burlington Church and Advisor for the National Association Commission on Youth Work, described the nine areas of concern, beginning with the three area divisions of Pilgrim Fellowship youth work. Other departments are related to College students, Work Camps, Post-High School work, Caravans, Inter-national projects, Life Service League and work being done by Dr. Harry R. Butman on the ministry.

Following a brief business meeting these officers were elected to serve for the year: Moderator, Rev. Paul G. Pitman, Burlington; Vice-Moderator, Mr. Robert Sterenbory, Cedar Rapids; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Vivian Beard, Burlington; Immediate Past Moderator, A. M. Bjornstad, Spencer; Directors: Mrs. Edward Adams, Marshalltown, Dr. Max Strang, Marshalltown, Mrs. Paul C. Miller, Charles City.

The Moderator of the Illinois Fellowship, Rev. Ellsworth D. Lyon, together with the Rev. Harvey Young and a carload of other Illinois folk, shared in the day's fellowship.

The next meeting of the Iowa Fellowship will be held in October, in Burlington, following the National Association meeting in Maywood.

A TEN-DOLLAR-CLUB FOR NEW CHURCH BUILDING

Dr. Max Strang, Marshalltown, Iowa

For less than a dime a day, you may help build three new Congregational churches a year through the \$10-Club.

This Club is sponsored by the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States, Agency of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, Rev. Howell D. Davies, Secretary-Treasurer, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

The Club is simple. You agree to send \$10.00 to the Missionary Society each time you are informed that dirt is turned for the erection of a new Congregational Church; with the understanding that you will not be called upon to contribute more than three times in one twelve month total, \$30.00 a year — a little less than nine cents a day.

The Club is practical. Not many can give thousands, or even hundreds, toward the building of a new Congregational Church. But many of us can give \$10.00 at a time. 20,000 contributors giving \$10.00 at a time would mean \$200,000. — enough to build and equip most new Congregational churches. This done three times a year would erect three new such buildings.

Comprehensive and Inspiring

The Club is comprehensive. Not only individuals, but also Sunday School departments and classes, Women's Fellowships and Circles, Pilgrim Fellowships and Youth Groups, Men's Clubs, Couples' Clubs, and other church groups may be members of the \$10-Club.

The Club is inspiring. Your \$10.00 is not lost in a general fund, or depleted by expensive promotion and administrative costs. It goes direct to the erection of a specific new Congregational Church. You are given information as to where and by whom the new church is being erected, who the pastor of it is, and other information about the new church building enterprise. You come to feel a personal interest in the project, because you have a stake in it. You can truly feel, and say, "I helped to build that Congregational Church."

Isn't it exciting to think that you may help directly in the building of as many as three new Congregational Churches in the next twelve months? Don't put off joining this Club. Do it today! Sign the form below, and mail it today to Rev. Howell D. Davies, Secretary-Treasurer, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

I hereby apply to become a member of the \$10-Club of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. It is understood that I will send \$10.00 each time that I am notified that dirt is being moved for the erection of a new Congregational Church of the National Association, but not to exceed three times a year. It is further understood that I may revoke my membership at any time I so desire.

Name _____

Address _____

Date _____

FROM THE LETTER BOX

Editor, THE CONGREGATIONALIST

In view of the ecumenical zeal of so many Protestant leaders, the following excerpt from THE REGISTER, National Edition, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12 (March 20, 1960), may be of interest.

"Reformation Being Weighed Anew"

"Church unity, one of the most discussed questions of our times, is possible through the aid of grace. The fact that the Catholic Church headed by the Pope is larger in membership than all Protestantism put together should make all people see that complete Church unity is really feasible.

"Without the grace of faith it is not possible to be a Catholic. Our arguments are strong, but faith is a divine gift. In God's good time He will fulfill literally Christ's statement: 'Other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd' (John x, 16).

"The world total of Catholics is put as 527,643,000 by the *National Catholic Almanac*. The Eastern Orthodox Churches have 129,643,000 members. The Protestant denominations have 209,961,283. There are 188,489,962 more Catholics in the world than the Protestants and the Orthodox put together.

"It should be obvious, therefore, which Church will be the one that will really achieve Church unity for all Christians."

Wayne, Michigan

(Rev.) Erwin A. Britton

MERGER DISCUSSED AT LONG BEACH

Sponsored by the Congregational Study and Discussion Group of the First Congregational Church of Long Beach, California, a meeting for presentation of both sides of the merger issue was held on Monday evening March 7 at the Dana Branch Public Library in that city. 114 persons from several Congregational Churches in the vicinity gathered to hear Dr. Jesse F. Perrin, Superintendent of the Southern California Conference, speak on "Advantages a Congregational Church Will Have on Becoming a Part of the United Church of Christ", and Dr. Harry R. Butman of the Congregational Church of the Messiah, Los Angeles, on "Advantages a Congregational Church Will Have By Remaining Congregational". After each speaker had had 30 minutes to present his views, a question and answer period was held. An hour later, when the chairman brought the meeting to a close, most of those present were still interested and seemed to want more information. The entire discussion was carried on with dignity. This kind of meeting should offer an example to Congregationalists in other sections for open and honest presentation of both sides of the issue.

(Reported by Mrs. C. M. Fowler, Long Beach)